

# POEMS

A  
A  
0  
0  
0  
3  
3  
8  
3  
6  
0  
4  
6



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

WALTER DE LA MARE



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES





# POEMS



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/poemswalter00dela>

# POEMS

BY WALTER DE LA MARE

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1906

PRINTED BY  
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,  
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.



22  
6107  
D37A.17  
1906

TO  
HENRY NEWBOLT

*April, 1906*

759527

The Author's thanks for permission to reprint are due to the Editors of the *Monthly Review* and the *Spectator*.

# CONTENTS

---

## CHARACTERS FROM SHAKESPEARE

	PAGE
FALSTAFF . . . . .	11
MACBETH . . . . .	13
BANQUO . . . . .	15
MERCUTIO . . . . .	16
JULIET . . . . .	17
JULIET'S NURSE . . . . .	18
DESDEMONA . . . . .	20
IAGO . . . . .	21
CASCA . . . . .	23
IMOGEN . . . . .	24
POLONIUS . . . . .	26
OPHELIA . . . . .	28
HAMLET . . . . .	30

	PAGE
— "COME!" . . . . .	32
— THE WINTER BOY . . . . .	33
TEARS ( <i>later "They Told Me"</i> ) . . . . .	35
SORCERY . . . . .	36
THE CHILDREN OF STARE . . . . .	38
AGE . . . . .	40
THE GLIMPSE . . . . .	42
REMEMBRANCE . . . . .	44
SHADOW . . . . .	45
UNREGARDING . . . . .	46
TREACHERY . . . . .	47
IN VAIN . . . . .	48
THE MIRACLE . . . . .	49
— EV'N ROSEMARY . . . . .	51
"KEEP INNOCENCY!" . . . . .	53
THE PHANTOM . . . . .	55
VOICES . . . . .	57
THULE . . . . .	59
THE BIRTHNIGHT . . . . .	60
THE DEATH-DREAM . . . . .	61
"WHERE IS THY VICTORY?" . . . . .	63
FOREBODING . . . . .	65

## SONNETS

	PAGE
THE HAPPY ENCOUNTER . . . . .	67
COUP DE GRÂCE . . . . .	69
APRIL . . . . .	70
SEA-MAGIC (TO R. I.) . . . . .	71
MESSENGERS . . . . .	72
IRREVOCABLE . . . . .	73
WINTER COMING . . . . .	74
THE MARKET-PLACE . . . . .	75
ANATOMY . . . . .	76
"EV'N IN THE GRAVE" . . . . .	77
OMNISCIENCE . . . . .	78
BRIGHT LIFE . . . . .	80
HUMANITY . . . . .	81
"GLORIA MUNDI" . . . . .	82
IDLENESS . . . . .	85
GOLIATH . . . . .	87
YOUTH . . . . .	90
THE VOICE OF MELANCHOLY . . . . .	95
PORTRAIT OF A BOY . . . . .	99

	PAGE
UNPAUSING . . . . .	100
VAIN FINDING . . . . .	101
VIRTUE . . . . .	102
NAPOLEON . . . . .	103
ENGLAND . . . . .	104
THE SEAS OF ENGLAND . . . . .	105
TRUCE . . . . .	107
EVENING . . . . .	108
NIGHT . . . . .	110
THE UNIVERSE . . . . .	111

## MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

REVERIE . . . . .	113
THE MASSACRE . . . . .	114
ECHO . . . . .	116
FEAR . . . . .	117
THE MERMAIDS . . . . .	119
MYSELF . . . . .	121
AUTUMN . . . . .	123
WINTER . . . . .	124
ENVOY—TO MY MOTHER . . . . .	126

## CHARACTERS FROM SHAKESPEARE

### FALSTAFF

'Twas in a tavern that with old age stooped  
And leaned rheumatic rafters o'er his head,—  
A blowzed, prodigious man which talked, and  
stared,

And rolled, as if with purpose, a small eye  
Like a sweet Cupid in a cask of wine.  
I could not view his fatness for his soul,  
Which peeped like harmless lightnings and  
was gone ;

As haps to voyagers of the summer air.  
And when he laughed, Time trickled 'neath  
those beams,

As in a glass ; and when in self-defence  
He puffed that paunch, and wagged that huge,  
Greek head,

Nosed like a Punchinello, then it seemed  
An hundred widows wept in his small voice,  
Now tenor, and now bass of drummy war.

He smiled, compact of loam, this orchard  
man ;

Mused like a midnight, webbed with moon-  
beam snares

Of flitting Love ; woke—and a King he stood,  
Whom all the world hath in sheer jest refused  
For helpless laughter's sake. And then, for-  
fend !

Bacchus and Jove reared vast Olympus there ;  
And Pan leaned leering from Promethean eyes.  
“ Lord ! ” sighed his aspect, weeping o'er the  
jest,

“ What simple mouse brought such a mountain  
forth ? ”



## MACBETH

ROSE, like dim battlements, the hills and  
reared

Steep crags into the fading primrose sky ;  
But in the desolate valleys fell small rain,  
Mingled with drifting cloud. I saw one come,  
Like the fierce passion of that vacant place,  
His face turned glittering to the evening sky ;  
His eyes, like grey despair, fixed satelessly  
On the still, rainy turrets of the storm ;  
And all his armour in a haze of blue.

He held no sword, bare was his hand and  
clenched,

As if to hide the inextinguishable blood  
Murder had painted there. And his wild mouth  
Seemed spouting echoes of deluded thoughts.  
Around his head, like vipers all distort,  
His locks shook, heavy-laden, at each stride.

If fire may burn invisible to the eye ;  
O, if despair strive everlastingly ;  
Then haunted here the creature of despair,  
Fanning and fanning flame to lick upon  
A soul still childish in a withered hell.

## BANQUO

WHAT dost thou here far from thy native place ?  
What piercing influences of heav'n have stirred  
Thy heart's last mansion all-corruptible to  
wake,

To move, and in the sweets of wine and fire  
Sit tempting madness with unholy eyes ?  
Begone, thou shudd'ring, pale anomaly !  
The dark presses without on yew and thorn ;  
Stoops now the owl upon her lonely quest ;  
The pomp runs high here, and our beauteous  
women

Seek no cold witness—O, let murder cry,  
Too shrill for human ear, only to God !  
Come not in pow'r to wreak so wild a vengeance !  
Thou know'st not now the limit of man's heart ;  
He is beyond thy knowledge : Gaze not then,  
Horror enthron'd lit with insanest light !

## MERCUTIO

ALONG an avenue of almond-trees  
Came three girls chattering of their sweethearts  
three.

And lo ! Mercutio, with Byronic ease,  
Out of his philosophic eye cast all  
A mere flow'r'd twig of thought, whereat . . .  
Three hearts fell still as when an air dies out  
And Venus falters lonely o'er the sea.

But when within the further mist of bloom  
His step and form were hid, the smooth child  
Ann

Said, "La, and what eyes he had !" and Lucy  
said,

"How sad a gentleman !" and Katharine,  
"I wonder, now, what mischief he was at."  
And these three also April hid away,  
Leaving the Spring faint with Mercutio.

## JULIET

SPARROW and nightingale—did ever such  
Strange birds consort in one untravelled heart?  
And yet what signs of summer, and what signs  
Of the keen snows humanity hath passed  
To come to this wild apple-day! To think  
So young a throat might rave so old a tune!  
Youth's amber eyes reflect such ardent stars,  
And capture heav'n with glancing! Was she  
not

Learn'd by some angel from her mother's womb  
At last to be Love's mistress? doth not he  
Rest all his arrows now and mutely adream  
Seek his own peace in her Italian locks?  
Cometh not Romeo singing in the night?—  
Singing of youth—whose clust'ring locks do nod  
And weave confusing shadows o'er his brow.  
Sing on bright tongue and quench these fears  
of silence!—

But at the end waits Death to pluck his bloom,  
Which is of yew the everlasting star.

## JULIET'S NURSE

IN old-world nursery vacant now of children,  
With posied walls, familiar, fair, demure,  
And facing southward o'er romantic streets,  
Sits yet and gossips winter's dark away  
One gloomy, vast, glossy, and wise, and sly :  
And at her side a cherried country cousin.  
Her tongue claps ever like a ram's sweet bell ;  
There's not a name but calls a tale to mind—  
Some marrowy patty of farce or melodram ;  
There's not a soldier but hath babes in view ;  
There's not on earth what minds not of the  
midwife :

'O, widowhood that left me still espoused !'  
Beauty she sighs o'er, and she sighs o'er gold ;  
Gold will buy all things, even a sweet husband,  
Else only Heav'n is left and—farewell youth !  
Yet, strangely, in that money-haunted head,  
The sad, gemm'd crucifix and incense blue

Is childhood come again. Her memory  
Is like an ant-hill which a twig disturbs,  
But twig stilled never. And to see her face,  
Broad with sleek homely beams ; her babied  
    hands,  
Ever like 'lighting doves, and her small eyes—  
Blue wells a-twinkle, arch and lewd and  
    pious—  
To dark'n all sudden into Stygian gloom,  
And paint disaster with uplifted whites,  
Is life's epitome. She prates and prates—  
A waterbrook of words o'er twelve small  
    pebbles.  
And when she dies—some grey, long, summer  
    evening,  
When the bird shouts of childhood thro' the  
    dusk,  
'Neath night's faint tapers,—then her body  
    shall  
Lie stiff with silks of sixty thrifty years.

## DESDEMONA

A STONY tomb guards one who simply  
dreams

Of peace that shines, tho' love went down in  
storm—

Dreams ever a dark visage stoopeth o'er,  
Whose darkness is not hatred but a mask  
Love took for tend'rer loving. And when  
night

Steals thro' the sky to mock Othello, then  
Rises she, counting at the windows high  
Star after star till all her prayer be told,  
And dawn repeat the glory of her end.

But on one day, in affluence of June,  
At topmost flood of noon a shadow falls  
Sweet at her side, chill head to snowy foot ;  
And then it seems the cypresses obscure  
Whisper, 'O willow !' ; and a shrill bird  
swoops,

As if the Moor had flown a silver soul  
To take her captive at the key of Heaven !



## IAGO

A DARK lean face, a narrow, slanting eye  
Whose deeps of blackness one pale taper's  
beam

Haunts with a flitting madness of desire ;  
A heart whose cinder at the breath of passion  
Glow's to a momentary core of heat  
Almost beyond indifference to endure :—  
So parched Iago frets his life away.

His scorn works ever in a brain whose wit  
This world hath fools too many and gross to  
seek.

Ever to live incredibly alone,  
Mask'd, shivering, deadly, with a simple Moor  
Of idiot gravity, and one pale flow'r  
Whose chill would quench in everlasting peace  
His soul's unmeasured flame—O paradox !  
Might he but learn the trick !—to wear her  
heart

One fragile hour of heedless innocence,  
And then, farewell, and the incessant grave.

"O fool! O villain!"—'tis the shuttlecock  
Wit never leaves at rest. It is his fate  
To be a needle in a world of hay,  
Where honour is the flattery of the fool;  
Sin, a tame bauble; lies, a tiresome jest;  
Virtue, a silly, whitewashed block of wood  
For words to fell. Ah! but the secret lacking—  
The secret of the child, the bird, the night,  
Faded, flouted, bespattered, in days so far  
Hate cannot bitter them, nor wrath deny;—  
Else were this Desdemona . . . Why!  
Woman a harlot is, and life a nest  
Fouled by long ages of forked fools. And  
God—

Iago deals not with a tale so dull:

T' have made the world—Fie on thee, Artisan!

## CASCA

BUTCHERS are honest though their agile knives  
They wield with an engrossed dexterity.  
To smile with natural hatred like a dog,  
Dull, fretful, thirsty ;—this is to be he  
Who may unheated lave in burning blood  
Hands white and large with idleness and sleep.  
He is earth's hero—this plain, bloated Casca.  
He glides like a great woman ; while a hare  
Squats in his shaggy breast, and stares, and  
    trembles  
If peeps the lightning in. So, let him pass ;  
His bloody hands his chosen orators.  
There is much pig's flesh in a world of swine,  
White as the lily.

## IMOGEN

Ev'N she too dead! all languor on her brow,  
All mute humanity's last simpleness,—  
And yet the roses in her cheeks unfall'n!  
Can death haunt silence with a silver sound?  
Can death, that hushes all music to a close,  
Pluck one sweet wire scarce-audible that  
trembles,

As if a little child, called Purity,  
Sang heedlessly on of his dear Imogen?  
Surely if some young flow'rs of Spring were put  
Into the tender hollow of her heart,  
'Twould faintly answer, trembling in their  
petals.

Poise but a wild bird's feather, it will stir  
On lips that even in silence wear the badge  
Only of truth! Let but a cricket wake  
And sing of home, and bid her lids unseal  
The unspeakable hospitality of her eyes.

O childless soul,—call once her husband's name !  
And even if indeed from these green hills  
Of England, far, her spirit flits forlorn,  
Back to its youthful mansion it will turn,  
Back to the floods of sorrow these sweet locks  
Yet heavy bear in drops ; and Night shall see  
Unwearying as her stars still Imogen,  
Pausing 'twixt death and life on one hush'd  
word.

## POLONIUS

THERE haunts in Time's bare house an active  
ghost,

Most flattered at his name, Polonius.

He moves small fingers much, and all his speech

Is like a sampler of precisest words,

Set in the pattern of a simpleton.

His mirth floats eerily down chill corridors ;

His sigh—it is a sound that loves a keyhole ;

His tenderness a faint court-tarnisht thing ;

His wisdom prates as from a wicker cage ;

His very belly is a pompous nought ;

His eye a page that hath forgot his errand.

Yet in his bran—his spiritual bran—

Lies hid a child's demure, small, silver whistle

Which, to his horror, God blows, unawares,

And sets men staring. And 'tis sad to think,

Might he but don indeed thin flesh and blood,

And pace important to Law's inmost room,  
He'd see, much marvelling, one immensely wise,  
Named Bacon, who, at sound of his youth's step,  
Would turn and call him Cousin—for the  
likeness.

## OPHELIA

THERE runs a crisscross pattern of small leaves  
Espalier, in a fading summer air,  
And there Ophelia walks, an azure flower,  
Whom wind, and snowflakes, and the sudden  
rain

Of love's wild skies have purified to heav'n.  
There is a beauty past all weeping now  
In that sweet, crooked mouth, that vacant  
smile ;

Only a lonely grey in those mad eyes,  
Which never on earth shall learn their loneli-  
ness.

And when 'mid startled birds she sings lament,  
Mocking in hope the long voice of the stream,  
It seems her heart's lute hath a broken string.  
Ivy she hath, that to old ruin clings ;  
And rosemary, that sees remembrance fade ;  
And pansies, deeper than the gloom of dreams ;



But ah ! if utterable, would this earth  
Remain the base, unreal thing it is?  
Better be out of sight of peering eyes ;  
Out—out of hearing of all-useless words,  
Spoken of tedious tongues in heedless ears !  
And lest, at last, the world should learn heart-  
secrets ;  
Lest that sweet wolf from some dim thicket  
steal ;  
Better the glassy horror of the stream !

## HAMLET

UMBRAGEOUS cedars, murmuring symphonies,  
Stoop'd in late twilight o'er dark Denmark's

Prince :

He sat, his eyes companioned with dream—  
Lustrous large eyes that held the world in view  
As some entrancèd child's a puppet show.

Darkness gave birth to the all-trembling stars,  
And a far roar of long-drawn cataracts,  
Flooding immeasurable night with sound.

He sat so still, his very thoughts took wing,  
And lightest Ariels the stillness haunted  
With midge-like measures ; but, at last, even  
they

Sank 'neath the influences of his night.

The sweet dust shed faint perfume in the  
gloom ;

Through all wild space the stars' bright arrows  
fell

On the lone Prince—the troubled son of man—  
On Time's dark waters in unearthly trouble :

Then, as the roar increased, and one fair tower  
Of cloud took sky and stars with majesty,  
He rose, his face a parchment of old age,  
Sorrow hath scribbled o'er, and o'er, and o'er.

---

COME !

FROM an island of the sea  
Sounds a voice that summons me,—  
“Turn thy prow, sailor, come  
With the wind home !”

Sweet o'er the rainbow foam,  
Sweet in the treetops, “Come,  
Coral, cliff, and watery sand,  
Sea-wave to land !

“Droop not thy lids at night,  
Furl not thy sails from flight ! . . . ”  
Cease, cease, above the wave,  
Deep as the grave !

O, what voice of the salt sea  
Calls me so insistently ?  
Echoes, echoes, night and day,—  
“Come, come away !”

## THE WINTER-BOY

I SAW Jack Frost come louping o'er  
A hill of blinding snow ;  
And hooked upon his arm he bore  
A basket all aglow.

Cherries and damsons, peach and pear,  
The faint and moonlike quince ;  
Never before were fruits as rare,  
And never have been since.

“Come, will ye buy, ma'am?” says he sweet ;  
And lo ! began to fly  
Flakes of bright, arrowy, frozen sleet  
From out the rosy sky.

“Silver nor pence, ma'am, ask I ; but  
One kiss my cheek to warm,—  
One with your scarlet lips tight shut  
Can do you, ma'am, no harm.”

O, and I stooped in that still place  
And pressed my lips to his ;  
And his cold locks about my face  
Shut darkness in my eyes.

Never, now never shall I be  
Lonely where snow is laid ;  
Sweet with his fruits comes louping he,  
And says the words he said.

His shrill voice echoes, slily creep  
His fingers cold and lean,  
And lull my dazzled eyes asleep  
His icy locks between.

## TEARS

THEY told me Pan was dead, but I  
Oft marvelled who it was that sang  
Down the green valleys languidly  
Where the grey elder-thickets hang.

Sometimes I thought it was a bird  
My soul had charged with sorcery ;  
Sometimes it seemed my own heart heard  
Inland the sorrow of the sea.

But even where the primrose sets  
The seal of her pale loveliness,  
I found amid the violets  
Tears of an antique bitterness.

## SORCERY

“WHAT voice is that I hear  
Crying across the pool?”

“It is the voice of Pan you hear,  
Crying his sorceries shrill and clear,  
In the twilight dim and cool.”

“What song is it he sings,  
Echoing from afar ;  
While the sweet swallow bends her wings,  
Filling the air with twitterings,  
Beneath the brightening star?”

The woodman answered me,  
His faggots on his back :—  
“Seek not the face of Pan to see ;  
Flee from his clear note summoning thee  
To darkness deep and black !



“ He dwells in thickest shade,  
Piping his notes forlorn  
Of sorrow never to be allayed ;  
Turn from his coverts sad  
Of twilight unto morn ! ”

The Woodman passed away  
Along the forest path ;  
His axe shone keen and grey  
In the last beams of day :  
And all was still as death :—

Only Pan singing sweet  
Out of Earth's fragrant shade ;  
I dreamed his eyes to meet,  
And found but shadow laid  
Before my tired feet.

Comes no more dawn to me,  
Nor bird of open skies.  
Only his woods' deep gloom I see  
Till, at the end of all, shall rise,  
Afar and tranquilly,  
Death's stretching sea.

## THE CHILDREN OF STARE

WINTER is fallen early  
On the house of Stare ;  
Birds in reverberating flocks  
Haunt its ancestral box ;  
Bright are the plenteous berries  
In clusters in the air.

Still is the fountain's music,  
The dark pool icy still,  
Whereon a small and sanguine sun  
Floats in a mirror on,  
Into a West of crimson,  
From a South of daffodil.

'Tis strange to see young children  
In such a wintry house ;  
Like rabbits' on the frozen snow  
Their tell-tale footprints go ;  
Their laughter rings like timbrels  
'Neath evening ominous :—

Their small and heightened faces  
 Like wine-red winter buds ;  
 Their frolic bodies gentle as  
 Flakes in the air that pass,  
 Frail as the twirling petal  
 From the briar of the woods.

Above them silence lours,  
 Still as an arctic sea ;  
 Light fails, night falls, the wintry moon  
 Glitters, the crocus soon  
 Will ope grey and distracted  
 On earth's austerity :—

Thick mystery, wild peril,  
 Law like an iron rod :—  
 Yet sport they on in Spring's attire,  
 Each with his tiny fire  
 Blown to a core of ardour  
 By the awful breath of God.

## AGE

THIS ugly old crone—  
Every beauty she had  
When a maid, when a maid.  
Her beautiful eyes,  
Too youthful, too wise,  
Seemed ever to come  
To so lightless a home—  
Cold and dull as a stone.  
And her cheeks—who would guess  
Cheeks cadav'rous as this  
Once with colours were gay  
As the flower on its spray?  
Who would ever believe  
Aught could bring one to grieve  
So much as to make  
Lips bent for love's sake  
So thin and so grey?  
O sweet Youth, come away!

All she asks is her lone,  
This old, desolate crone.  
She loves us no more ;  
She is too old to care  
For the charms that of yore  
Made her body so fair.  
Past repining, past care,  
She lives but to bear  
One or two fleeting years  
Earth's indiff'rence : her tears  
Have lost now their heat ;  
Her hands and her feet  
Do but shake but to be  
Shed as leaves from a tree ;  
And her poor heart beats on  
Like a sea—the storm gone.

## THE GLIMPSE

ART thou asleep? or have thy wings  
Wearied of my unchanging skies?  
Or, haply, is it fading dreams  
Are in my eyes?

Not ev'n an echo in my heart  
Tells me the courts thy feet trod last,  
Bare as a leafless wood it is  
When summer's past.

My inmost mind is but a book  
The reader dulls with lassitude,  
Wherein the same old, lovely words  
Sound poor and rude.

Yet through this vapid surface, I  
Seem to see old-time deeps; I see,  
Past the dark painting of the hour,  
Life's ecstacy,

Only a moment ; as when day  
Is set, and in the shade of night,  
Through all the clouds that compassed her,  
    Stoops into sight.

Pale, changeless, everlasting Dian,  
Gleams on the prone Endymion,  
Troubles the dulness of his dreams,—  
    And then is gone.

## REMEMBRANCE

THE sky was like a waterdrop  
In shadow of a thorn,  
Clear, tranquil, beautiful,  
Dark, forlorn.

Lightning along its margin ran ;  
A rumour of the sea  
Rose in profundity and sank  
Into infinity.

Lofty and few the elms, the stars  
In the vast boughs most bright ;  
I stood a dreamer in a dream  
In the unstirring night.

Not wonder, worship, not ev'n peace  
Seemed in my heart to be :  
Only the memory of one,  
Of all most dead to me.



## SHADOW

EVEN the beauty of the rose doth cast,  
When its bright, fervid noon is past,  
A still and lengthening shadow in the dust  
    Till darkness come  
    And take its strange dream home.

The transient bubbles of the water paint  
'Neath their frail arch a shadow faint ;  
The golden nimbus of the windowed saint,  
    Till shine the stars,  
    Casts pale and trembling bars.

The loveliest thing earth hath, a shadow hath,  
A dark and livelong hint of death,  
Haunting it ever till its last faint breath :  
    Who, then, may tell  
The beauty of heav'n's shadowless asphodel ?

## UNREGARDING

PUT by thy days like withered flowers  
In twilight hidd'n away !  
Memory shall upbuild thee bowers  
Sweeter than they.

Hoard not from swiftness of thy stream  
The shallowest cruse of tears !  
Pools still as heav'n shall lovelier dream  
In future years.

Squander thy love as she that flings  
Her soul away on night,—  
Lovely are love's far echoings,  
Height unto height !

O, make no compact with the sun,  
No compact with the moon !  
Night falls full-cloaked, and light is gone,  
Sudden and soon.

## TREACHERY

SHE had amid her ringlets bound  
Green leaves to rival their dark hue ;  
How could such locks with beauty bound  
    Dry up their dew,  
    Wither them through and through ?

She had within her dark eyes lit  
Sweet fires to burn all doubt away ;  
Yet did those fires, in darkness lit,  
    Burn but a day,  
    Not ev'n till twilight stay.

She had within a dusk of words  
A vow in simple splendour set ;  
How, in the memory of such words,  
    Could she forget  
    That vow—the soul of it ?

IN VAIN

I KNOCKED upon thy door ajar,  
While yet the woods with buds were grey,  
Nought but a little child I heard  
    Warbling at break of day.

I knocked when June had lured her rose  
To mask the sharpness of its thorn ;  
Knocked yet again, heard only yet  
    Thee singing of the morn.

The frail convolvulus had wreath'd  
Its cup, but the faint flush of eve  
Lingered upon thy Western wall ;  
    Thou hadst no word to give.

Once yet I came ; the winter stars  
Above thy house wheeled wildly bright ;  
Footsore I stood before thy door,—  
    Wide open into night.

## THE MIRACLE

WHO beckons the green ivy up  
    Its solitary tower of stone?  
What spirit lures the bindweed's cup  
    Unfaltering on?  
Calls ev'n the starry lichen to climb  
By agelong inches endless Time?

Who bids the hollyhock uplift  
    Her rod of fast-sealed buds on high;  
Fling wide her petals silent, swift,  
    Lovely to the sky?  
Since as she kindled, so she'll fade,  
Flow'r above flow'r in squalor laid.

Ever the heavy billow rears  
    All its sea-length in green, hushed wall;  
But totters as the shore it nears,  
    Foams to its fall;  
Where was its mark? on what vain quest  
Rose that great water from its rest?

So creeps ambition on ; so climb

Man's vaunting thoughts. He, set on high,  
Forgets his birth, small space, brief time,  
That he shall die ;

Dreams blindly in his dark, still air ;  
Consumes his strength ; strips himself bare ;

Rejects delight, ease, pleasure, hope,  
Seeking in vain, but seeking yet,  
Past earthly promise, earthly scope,  
On one aim set :

As if like Chaucer's child he thought  
All but "O Alma !" nought.

## EVEN ROSEMARY

I HAVE seen a grave this day,  
Yet no worm did therein lie ;—  
Only sweet Faith laid away,  
    Lonely to die,  
Lonely as he lived, to die.

There's no buds. Ev'n rosemary  
Hath sad dreams for smell withal ;  
Ev'n Hope's rose's leaf would be  
    Restless to fall ;  
To have done, and fade, and fall.

I will never walk again  
Where such brittle dust doth lie ;  
Where to weep were quite in vain ;  
    Vain too to sigh,  
Only vain to weep and sigh.

Flee afar, then, heart, lest thou,  
Quick with brooding on that spot,  
Feign to see a dead face now,  
Features forgot,  
Eyes ev'n Heaven shall open not!



## KEEP INNOCENCY

LIKE an old battle, youth is wild  
With bugle and spear, and counter cry,  
Fanfare and drummery, yet a child  
Dreaming of that sweet chivalry,  
The piercing terror cannot see.

He, with a mild and serious eye  
Along the azure of the years,  
Sees the sweet pomp sweep hurtling by ;  
But he sees not death's blood and tears,  
Sees not the plunging of the spears.

And all the strident horror of  
Horse and rider in red defeat,  
Is only music fine enough  
To lull him into slumber sweet  
In fields where ewe and lambkin bleat.

O, if with such simplicity  
Himself take arms and suffer war ;  
With beams his targe shall gilded be,  
Tho' in the thickening gloom be far  
The steadfast light of any star !

Tho' hoarse War's eagle on him perch,  
Quickened with guilty lightnings,—there  
It shall in vain for terror search,  
Where a child's eyes 'neath bloody hair  
Gaze purely thro' the dingy air.

And when the wheeling rout is spent,  
Tho' in the heaps of slain he lie ;  
Or lonely in his last content ;  
Quenchless shall burn in secrecy  
The flame Death knows his victors by.

## THE PHANTOM

WILT thou never come again,

Beauteous one?

Yet the woods are green and dim,

Yet the birds' deluding cry

Echoes in the hollow sky,

Yet the falling waters brim

The clear pool which thou wast fain

To paint thy lovely cheek upon,

Beauteous one!

I may see the thorny rose

Stir and wake

The dark dewdrop on her gold;

But thy secret will she keep

Half-divulged—yet all untold,

Since a child's heart woke from sleep.

The faltering sunbeam fades and goes;

The night-bird whistles in the brake;

The willows quake;

Utter darkness falls; the wind

Sighs no more:

Yet it seems the silence yearns  
But to catch thy fleeting foot.  
Yet the wandering glowworm burns  
Lest her lamp should light thee not—  
Thee whom I shall never find.  
Though thy shadow lean before,  
Thou thyself return'st no more—  
Never more.

All the world's woods, tree o'er tree,  
Come to nought.  
Birds, flow'rs, beasts, how transient they!—  
Angels of a flying day ;  
Love is quenched ; dreams drown in sleep ;  
Ruin nods along the deep :  
Only thou immortally  
Hauntest on  
This poor earth in Time's flux caught ;  
Hauntest on, pursued—unwon,  
Phantom child of memory,  
Beauteous one !

## VOICES

WHO is it calling by the darkened river  
Where the moss lies smooth and deep,  
And the dark trees lean unmoving arms,  
Silent and vague in sleep,  
And the bright-heeled constellations pass  
In splendour through the gloom ;—  
Who is it calling o'er the darkened river  
In music, "Come!"?

Who is it wandering in the summer meadows  
Where the children stoop and play,  
'Mid the green faint-scented flowers, spinning  
The guileless hours away?  
Who touches their bright hair? who puts  
A wind-shell to each cheek,  
Whisp'ring betwixt its breathing silences,  
"Seek! seek!"?

Who is it watching in the gathering twilight,  
    When the curfew bird hath flown  
On eager wings, from song to silence,  
    To its darkened nest alone?  
Who takes for brightening eyes the stars,  
    For locks the still moonbeam,  
Sighs through the dews of evening peacefully-  
    Falling, "Dream!"?

So are we haunted ; night and day  
    Invisible witnesses  
Speak, or keep silent ; watch and wait ;  
    Steadfast and slumberless :—  
Shades of the air, shades in the mind,  
    Ghosts in the heart that weep  
In this thicket of all perplexities  
    And tumult, "Sleep!"

## THULE

IF thou art sweet as they are sad  
Who on the shores of Time's salt sea  
Watch on the dim horizon fade  
Ships bearing love to night and thee ;

If past all beacons Hope hath lit  
In the dark wanderings of the deep,  
They who unwilling traverse it  
Dream not till dawn unseal their sleep ;

Ah, cease not in thy winds to mock  
Us who yet wake but cannot see  
Thy distant shores ; who at each shock  
Of the waves' onset faint for thee !

## THE BIRTHNIGHT

DEAREST, it was a night  
That in its darkness rocked Orion's stars ;  
A sighing wind ran faintly white  
Along the willows, and the cedar boughs  
Laid their wide hands in stealthy peace across  
The starry silence of their antique moss :  
No sound save rushing air,  
Cold, yet most sweet with Spring,  
And in thy mother's arms, couched weeping  
there,  
Thou, lovely thing.



## THE DEATH-DREAM

WHO, now, put dreams into thy slumb'ring  
mind ?

Who, with bright Fear's lean taper, crossed a  
hand

Athwart its beam, and stooping, truth  
maligned,

Spake so thy spirit speech should understand,  
And with a dread "He's dead!" awaked a  
peal

Of frenzied bells along the vacant ways  
Of thy poor earthly heart; waked thee to  
steal,

Like dawn distraught upon unhappy days,  
To prove nought, nothing? Was it Time's  
large voice

Out of th' inscrutable future whispered so?

Or but the horror of a little noise

Earth wakes at dead of night? Or does Love  
know

When his sweet wings weary and droop, and  
ev'n

In sleep cries audibly a shrill remorse?

Or, haply, was it I who out of dream

Stole but a little way where shadows course,—

Called back to thee across the eternal stream?

“WHERE IS THY VICTORY?”

NONE, none can tell where I shall be  
When the unclean earth covers me ;  
Only in surety if thou cry  
Where my perplexèd ashes lie,  
Know, 'tis but death's necessity  
That keeps my tongue from answering thee.

Ev'n if no more my shadow may  
Lean for a moment in thy day ;  
No more the whole earth light'n as if  
Thou near, it had nought else to give :—  
Surely 'tis but Heav'n's strategy  
To prove death immortality.

Yet should I sleep—and no more dream,  
Sad would the last awakening seem,  
If my cold heart, with love once hot,  
Had thee in sleep remember'd not :  
How could I wake to find that I  
Had slept alone, yet easefully ?

64 "WHERE IS THY VICTORY?"

Or should in sleep glad visions come :  
Sick, in an alien land, for home  
Would be my eyes in their bright beam ;  
Awake, we know 'tis not a dream ;  
Asleep, some devil in the mind  
Might truest thoughts with false enwind.

Life is a mockery if death  
Have the least power men say it hath.  
As to a hound that mewing waits,  
Death opens, and shuts to, his gates ;  
Else ev'n dry bones might rise and say,—  
" 'Tis *ye* are dead and laid away."

Innocent children out of nought  
Build up a universe of thought,  
And out of silence fashion Heaven :  
So, dear, is this poor dying even,  
Seeing thou shalt be touched, heard, seen,  
Better than when dust stood between.

## FOREBODING

THOU canst not see him standing by—

Time—with a popped hand  
Stealing thy youth's simplicity,  
Even as falls unceasingly  
His waning sand.

He'll pluck thy childish roses as  
The summer from her bush  
Strips all the loveliness that was ;  
Ev'n to the silence evening has  
Thy laughter hush.

Thy locks too faint for earthly gold,  
The meekness of thine eyes,  
He'll dark'n and dim, and to his fold  
Drive, 'gainst the night, thy stainless, old  
Innocencies ;

Thy simple words confuse and mar,  
Thy tenderest thoughts delude,  
Draw a long cloud athwart thy star,  
Still with loud timbrels heav'n's far  
Faint interlude.

Thou canst not see ; *I* see, dearest ;  
O, then, yet patient be,  
Tho' love refuse thy heart all rest,  
Tho' even love wax angry, lest  
Love should lose *thee* ?

## SONNETS

### THE HAPPY ENCOUNTER

I SAW sweet Poetry turn troubled eyes  
On shaggy Science nosing in the grass,  
For by that way poor Poetry must pass  
On her long pilgrimage to Paradise.  
He snuffled, grunted, squealed ; perplexed by  
flies,  
Parched, weatherworn, and near of sight,  
alas !  
From peering close where very little was  
In dens secluded from the open skies.

But Poetry in bravery went down,  
And called his name, soft, clear, and fear-  
lessly ;  
Stooped low, and stroked his muzzle over-  
grown ;

68      THE HAPPY ENCOUNTER

Refreshed his drought with dew ; wiped pure  
and free

His eyes : and lo ! laughed loud for joy to  
see

In those grey deeps the azure of her own.



## COUP DE GRÂCE

So Malice sharp'd his pen, and nibbled it,  
And leered 'neath faltering eyelids at the  
flame

Of his calm candle till a notion came,  
Coarse, acrid, with a distant hint of wit.  
Once more he simmered, and once more he  
writ,

Till not a dash was dull, a comma lame ;  
Then exquisitely failed to sign his name,  
Leaving the world to trace a slug by its spit.

Such was the barb, O Keats, (vain tongues  
would have),

Troubled in its calm flight thy lovely art ;  
Cankered thy youth, thy faith ; abashed the  
brave,

Untarnishable sweetness of thy heart :  
How should these dullards dream *they*  
winged the dart  
That pierced thee, silent, in th' unanswering  
grave !

## APRIL

COME, then, with show'rs, I love thy cloudy  
face

Gilded with splendour of the sunbeams  
thro'

The heedless glory of thy locks: I know  
The arch, sweet languor of thy fleeting grace,  
The windy lovebeams of thy dwelling-place,  
Thy dim dells where in azure bluebells blow,  
The brimming rivers where thy lightnings go  
Harmless and full and swift from race to race.

Thou tak'st all young hearts captive with  
thine eyes;

At rumour of thee the tongues of children ring  
Louder than bees; the golden poplars rise  
Like trumps of peace; and birds, on home-  
ward wing,  
Fly mocking echoes shrill along the skies,  
Above the waves' grave diapasoning.

## SEA-MAGIC

TO R. I.

MY heart faints in me for the distant sea,  
The roar of London is the roar of ire  
The lion utters in his old desire  
For Libya out of dim captivity ;  
The long bright silver of Cheapside I see,  
Her gilded weathercocks on roof and spire  
Exulting eastward in the western fire ;  
All things recall one heart-sick memory :—  
Ever the rustle of the advancing foam,  
The surges' desolate thunder, and the cry  
As of some lone babe in the whispering sky ;  
Ever I peer into the restless gloom  
To where a ship clad dim and loftily  
Looms steadfast in the wonder of her home.

## MESSENGERS

A FEW all-faithful words, a glance from eyes  
That in their deeps hide hosts they cannot  
see—

Phantoms of loveliest simplicity ;  
A transient touch—some bird's that twittering  
flies

Into the primrose of the deepening skies ;  
A child's pure cheek pressed cold and tran-  
quilly

Upon a brow ashamed, in misery ;  
A voice that sings easefully echo-wise :

Whence are they in a world so alien ?

Are they the waterdrops of that vast flood  
Death shall unloose ? Shall all they hint, again  
In fulness be retold ? Shall this wild blood  
That rocks to them, lull down to stillness when  
These light-wing messengers flit back to God ?

## IRREVOCABLE

I SOMETIMES wonder what my life doth mean  
Now you are gone ; the long, bright days,  
the nights

Of silence, the vicissitudes, the sights,  
The intrusive sounds, the dull, continuous  
scene—

It only minds me of the might-have-been,  
And in itself a taper is that lights  
Its own dark solitude : my spirit fights  
In vain to pierce the veil and look within.

The fountain of my tears is sealed and dry ;  
I do not grieve ; my laughter is a jest ;  
My prayers an arid bitterness ; each sigh  
The heedless habit of a tired breast.  
My heart is dead ; and when I come to die,  
Only to think of you no more were best.

## WINTER COMING

O, THOU art like an autumn to my days,  
Shining in still, sweet light on lonelier hours  
Of yellowing leaves, and well-nigh faded  
flowers ;  
In thy dear sight the birds renew their lays,  
But with how faint a cheer ! how meek their  
praise  
Rememb'ring April gone ! — his crystal  
showers,  
His heav'n-surmounting wind-engirdled towers,  
And all the graveness of his childlike ways.

The hours press closer on to winter now ;  
In misty solitudes brief suns arise ;  
And all the wonder now hath left my eyes,  
And all my heart sinks to remember how  
Once, once we loved, we who are grown so  
wise—  
Youth vanished, winter coming—I and thou !

## THE MARKET-PLACE

My mind is like a clamorous market-place ;  
All day in wind, rain, sun, its babel wells ;  
Voice answering to voice in tumult swells.  
Chaffering and laughing, pushing for a place,  
My thoughts haste on, gay, strange, poor,  
simple, base ;  
This one buys dust, and that a bauble sells :  
But none to any scrutiny hints or tells  
The haunting secrets hidd'n in each sad face.  
Ay, sad, 'neath sigh and smile, frown, laughter,  
jeer ;  
Yet sad—like that still twilight in the West,  
Lonely with one sweet star serene and clear,  
Dwelling, when all this place is hushed to rest,  
On vacant stall, gold, refuse, worst and best,  
Abandoned utterly in haste and fear.

## ANATOMY

By chance, my fingers, resting on my face,  
Stayed suddenly where in its orbit shone  
The lamp of all things beautiful ; then on,  
Following more heedfully, did softly trace  
Each arch and prominence and hollow place  
That shall revealed be when all else is gone—  
Warmth, colour, roundness—to oblivion,  
And nothing left but darkness and disgrace.  
Life like a moment passed seemed then to be ;  
A transient dream this raiment that it wore ;  
While spelled my hand out its mortality,  
Made certain all that had seemed doubt  
before :  
Proved—O how vaguely, yet how lucidly!—  
How much death does : and yet can do no  
more.



## EV'N IN THE GRAVE

I LAID my inventory at the hand  
Of Death, who in his gloomy arbour sate ;  
And while he conned it, sweet and desolate  
I heard Love singing in that quiet land.  
He read the record even to the end—  
The heedless, livelong injuries of Fate,  
The burden of foe, the burden of love and  
hate ;  
The wounds of foe, the bitter wounds of friend :

All, all, he read—ay, ev'n the indifference,  
The vain talk, vainer silence, hope and  
dream.

He questioned me : "What seek'st thou then  
instead ? "

I bowed my face in the pale evening gleam.  
Then gazed he on me with strange innocence :  
"Ev'n in the grave thou'lt have thyself,"  
he said.

## OMNISCIENCE

"Strew me o'er with maiden flowers."

*Henry VIII.*

WHY look'd'st thou on the beauties of the  
earth

So gravely in thy deep omniscience;

Turn'd'st from the dews of their unclouded  
birth

In woods where children call, and innocence

Broods like a dream within a lovely face,

To one wan hint, one backward glance on  
grief,

On darken'd eyes beyond Time's fleeting  
grace—

Death heavy and endless of a life too brief?

O love immeasurably meek that scanned,

Past all earth's fickle hopes, past beauty, lust,

The tottering palaces of wind and sand,  
Pride and vain pomp, tears, ashes, rapture,  
dust,  
The unearthly tomb whose fading stone shall  
keep  
Man, till his Saviour come, at peace asleep!

## BRIGHT LIFE

"COME now," I said, "put off these webs of  
death,

Distract this leaden yearning of thine eyes  
From lichen'd banks of peace, sad mysteries  
Of dust fall'n-in where passed the flitting  
breath :

Turn thy sick thoughts from him that slumbereth  
In moulder'd linen to the living skies,  
The sun's bright-clouded principalities,  
The salt deliciousness the sea-breeze hath !

Lay thy warm hand on earth's cold clods and  
think

What exquisite greenness sprouts from these  
to grace  
The moving fields of summer ; on the brink  
Of archèd waves the sea-horizon trace,  
Whence wheels night's galaxy ; and in silence  
sink

Thy pride in rapture of life's dwelling-place ! "

## HUMANITY

‘EVER exulting in thyself, on fire  
To flaunt the purple of the Universe,  
To strut and strut, and thy great part rehearse ;  
Ever the slave of every proud desire ;  
Come now a little down where sports thy sire !  
Choose thy small better from thy abounding worse !  
Prove thou thy lordship who hadst dust for nurse,  
And for thy swaddling the primeval mire !”

Then stooped our Manhood nearer, deep and still,  
As from earth’s mountains an unvoyaged sea,  
Hushed my faint voice in its great peace until  
’T seemed but a bird’s cry in eternity ;  
And in its future loomed the undreamable,  
And in its past slept simple men like me.

## GLORIA MUNDI

UPON a bank, easeless with knobs of gold,  
    Beneath a canopy of noonday smoke,  
I saw a measureless Beast, morose and bold,  
    With eyes like one from filthy dreams awoke,  
Who stares upon the daylight in despair  
For very terror of the nothing there.

This beast in one flat hand clutched vulture-wise  
    A glitt'ring image of itself in jet,  
And with the other groped about its eyes  
    To drive away the dreams that pestered it ;  
And never ceased its coils to toss and beat  
The mire encumbering its feeble feet.

Sharp was its hunger, though continually  
    It seemed a cud of stones to ruminate,  
And often like a dog let glittering lie  
    'This meatless fare, its foolish gaze to sate ;  
Once more convulsively to stoop its jaw,  
Or seize the morsel with an envious paw.

Indeed, it seemed a hidden enemy

Must lurk within the clouds above that bank,  
It strained so wildly its pale, stubborn eye,  
To pierce its own foul vapours dim and  
dank ;

Till, wearied out, it raved in wrath and foam  
Daring that Nought Invisible to come.

Ay, and it seemed some strange delight to find  
In this unmeaning din, till, suddenly,  
As if it heard a rumour on the wind,  
Or far away its freër children cry,  
Lifting its face made-quiet, there it stayed  
Till died the echo its own rage had made.

That place alone was barren where it lay ;  
Flow'rs bloomed beyond, utterly sweet and  
fair ;  
And ev'n its own dull heart might think to  
stay

In livelong thirst of a clear river there,  
Flowing from unseen hills to unheard seas,  
Through a still vale of yew and almond trees.

And then I spied in the lush green below  
    Its tortured belly, One, like silver, pale,  
With fingers closed upon a rope of straw,  
    That bound the Beast, squat neck to hoary  
        tail ;  
Lonely in all that verdure faint and deep,  
He watched the monster as a shepherd sheep.

I marvelled at the power, strength, and rage  
    Of this poor creature in such slavery bound,  
Tettered with worms of fear ; forlorn with age ;  
    Its blue wing-stumps stretched helpless on  
        the ground ;  
While twilight faded into darkness deep,  
And he who watched it piped its pangs asleep.



## IDLENESS

I SAW old Idleness, fat, with great cheeks  
Puffed to the huge circumference of a sigh,  
But past all tinge of apples long ago.  
His boyish fingers twiddled up and down  
The filthy remnant of a cup of physic  
That thick'd in odour all the while he stayed.  
His eyes were sad as fishes that swim up,  
And stare upon an element not theirs  
Through a thin skin of shrewish water, then  
Turn on a languid fin, and dip, dip, down,  
Into unplumbed, vast, oozy deeps of dream.  
His stomach was his master, and proclaimed it :  
And never were such meagre pupils set  
Before so vexed a tyrant, as his thoughts  
Before that gross epitome of ills.  
There seemed no notion i' him not of himself ;  
And when upon the wan green of his eye  
I marked the gathering lustre of a tear,

Thought I myself should weep, until I caught  
A grey, smug smile of satisfaction smirch  
His pallid features at his misery.

And much I laughed to see the little snares  
He'd set for pests to vex him : his great feet  
Prisoned in greater boots ; so narrow a stool  
To seat such elephantine parts as his ;  
Ay, and the book he read—a Hebrew Bible ;  
And, to incite a somewhat backward wit,  
An old, crabb'd, worm'd, Greek dictionary ;  
and—

A foxy Ovid bound in dappled calf.

## GOLIATH

STILL as a mountain with dark pines and sun  
He stood between the armies, and his shout  
Rolled from the empyrean above the host ;—  
“ Bid any little flea ye have come forth,  
And wince at death upon my finger-nail ! ”  
He turned his large-boned face ; and all his  
steel

Tossed into beams the lustre of the noon ;  
And all the shaggy horror of his locks  
Rustled like locusts in a field of corn ;  
The meagre pupil of his shameless eye  
Moved like a cormorant o'er a glassy sea.  
He stretched his limbs, and laughed into the  
air,

To feel the groaning sinews of his breast,  
And the long gush of his swell'n arteries  
pause :

And, nodding, wheeled, tow'ring in all his  
height.

Then, like a wind that hushes, gazed and saw  
Down, down, far down upon the untroubled  
green

A shepherd-boy that swung a little sling.  
Goliath shut his lids to drive that mote  
Which vexed the eastern azure of his eye  
Out of his vision ; and stared down again.  
Yet stood the youth there, ruddy in the flare  
Of his vast shield, nor spake, nor quailed,  
gazed up

As one might scan a mountain to be scaled.  
Then, as it were, a voice unearthly still  
Cried in the cavern of his bristling ear,  
"His name is little Death!" And, like the  
flush

That dyes Sahara to its lifeless verge,  
His brow's bright brass flamed into sudden  
crimson ;

And his great spear leapt upward, lightning-like,  
Shaking a dreadful thunder in the air ;  
Spun betwixt earth and sky, bright as a berg  
That hoards the sunlight in a myriad spires,  
Crashed : and struck echo thro' an army's  
heart.

Then paused Goliath, and stared down again.  
And fleet-foot Fear from rolling orbs perceived  
Steadfast, unharmed, a stooping shepherd-boy  
Frowning upon the target of his face.

And wrath tossed suddenly up once more his  
hand ;

And a deep groan grieved all his strength in  
him.

He breathed ; and, lost in dazzling darkness,  
prayed—

Besought his reins, his gloating gods, his youth :  
And turned to smite what he no more could  
see.

Then sped the singing pebble-messenger,  
The chosen of the Lord from Israel's brooks,  
Fleet to its mark, and hollowed a light path  
Down to the appalling Babel of his brain.  
And like the smoke of dreaming Souffrière  
Dust rose in cloud, spread wide, slow silted  
down

Softly all softly on his armour's blaze.

## YOUTH

WITH splendour shod sweeps Sirius through  
the night,

But Youth yet brightlier runs his course than  
he.

Youth hath the raiment of his childhood doffed  
At morning-prime by life's resounding sea,  
And lonely in beauty stands confronting  
Heaven.

He strides lithe-limbed, magnificently armed ;  
His young head helmeted with high desire ;  
His heart a haven of braveries fleet and eager ;  
His eyes like heroes never to be subdued,  
And all man's passionate history in his blood.  
Youth is Adonis, panting for the chase,  
Scorning all languor, blandishment, all ease,  
Scorning to dally while the noon slips by,  
While rings the horn, fleets golden and sweet  
the hour,

And bursts untamed Ambition through the  
glades.

Oh, in what wrath he sees still Evening pour  
Her crystal vial from the darkening West !

Now is an end to day's bright prowess come ;  
The flaming sunbeams multitudinous

Fade, as they kindled, on the unfolded rose.

He loves not Night's pale solitary brows,

Nor silver Hesper in the shadowy steep,

But like a panther fretteth in his lair,

Turning to slumb'r as to his strength's dis-  
grace ;

To sigh in dream 'neath moonlight's arrowy  
showers,

Marv'ling what makes Apollo's lute so still.

But dawn ascends. The night-watch'd stars  
shall not

Cry from heav'n's battlements in vain of day.

Earth wakens, cold with flowers, and the  
mists,

Smitten of light, fly, fall in radiant dew.

Birds mounting to the dayspring pour their  
throats ;

And in like music she beguileth him :—

"Thou babe, here is my breast! Thou foolish  
one,

Strip off dull sleep; thy mother—here am I!"  
And frowning up he leaps to her smooth arms,  
As mounts the fledgling eagle tow'rd the sun . . .  
How hasten his echoing feet when sweet  
tongues call,

And Love's unerring archery sings nigh!  
Dim then with incense burns his heart of  
flame;

His thoughts are aisles where ever voices  
quire:

And silence is divine with folded wings.  
He voyages at a hazard Arctic seas;  
Scales, as for pastime, ice-encinctured Alps;  
No torrent daunts him; no abyss appals;  
Wind ne'er so faintly the far horn of danger,  
Its echo tingles on a listening ear;  
Whithersoever summon it he'll follow,  
And vain were every bounty earth can squander  
To salve the sorrow for a deed undared.  
He pines to set desire beyond his scope,  
And beauteous childhood wells into his soul  
In covet of the fruits that droop and burn



Where rise th' unchanging terraces of death.  
What worth renown when all that dawn conceived

Fades to a phantom in the chimes of night?  
What worth the flattery of a myriad tongues  
If mute be the proud umpire of his heart?  
He'll strive him for an amaranthine crown  
Outlasting laurel and the world's applause.  
Earth but a shadow is of beauty cast  
In trembling beams upon the stream of Time:  
He'll set his heart no more on shadows now;  
But brood in envy of those high summits Man  
Hath left to sparkle in midmost heav'n alone;  
Strive with smooth lead to plumb the un-  
answering deeps,

Where Wisdom heark'ns the music of her wells.  
He'll walk in sure confederacy with truth.  
Betwixt him and the Hills Celestial falls  
Only a blinding avalanche of sun . . .  
Flow'rs, birds, the river rushing in its strength,  
The pine upon the mountains, the broad wind  
Burdened with snowy coldness, the salt sea,  
The shalms of morning—Youth's wild heart  
holds all ;—

All glory, all wonder, purity, beauty, grace,  
All things conceived of man, except defeat.  
So spurns he hope: his hope is certainty.  
And faith—while every act is faith trans-  
figured,

How should through mournful shadows glance  
such eyes?

God walketh in His brightness on the hills,  
And sitteth in the wonder of the bow,  
And calleth o'er the waters of delight:—  
What were all Time to prove all gratitude?  
What life's brief dust to Heav'n's unfading  
rose? . . .

How fleet a foot then Youth's for long pursuit!  
How high a courage to search wisdom out,  
While he unwitting of't burns folly away!  
Is aught too bold, too infinite, to dream  
Fate's arm may guard for babes to spring  
from him,  
Who flings his life down, drenched with rapture  
through,  
To buy unchallenged honour for his bones?

## THE VOICE OF MELANCHOLY

“RETURN from out thy stillness, though the  
dust

Lie thick upon thy earthly beauty, though  
The ever-wandering shapes of Night creep  
through

Youth's fallen tabernacle! Now in long  
Surge of recurrent light the days swing by,  
Soundless above thine ears once musical,  
Unnumbered by a heart expert in love,  
Unmarked by those fall'n princes once thine  
eyes.—

Oh, what defeat, bright warrior, what disgrace,  
To fret entwined in the bindweed's root,  
And rot like manna, lovelier than the rose!  
Once thou would'st turn thy face enriched  
with smiles,

Thy lips a thought asunder, and thy hair  
Shining within the sun's magnificent ray;

96 THE VOICE OF MELANCHOLY

Stand would'st thou like a beacon by deep  
seas :—

All light, all excellence, all joy, gone now ;  
Even the classic beauty of thy face  
Melted like snow ; dark as a moon eclipsed ;  
Never to bright'n again 'neath endless night . . . .”  
So did I brood, unanswered and alone,  
Crying, “ Return, return !”

O simple fool !

What would'st thou out of the deep grave  
should rise ?

What, from amid death's cypresses, awake ;  
Heave up the sod ; press back the fruited  
boughs ;

And lift his eyes across the tombs on thee ?  
Would love burn there, or measureless re-  
proach ?

Would Life's bright mantle, stiff with idiot  
pomp,

Lie easy on shoulders whence a shroud had  
fall'n ?

Would Morn's shrill nightingale above his brows  
Ring sweet on ears long-sealed in echoless  
peace ?

Would those grey hands caress earth's tarnish'd  
orb,

And those still feet be amorous of spurs?

And that unutterably agèd head,

Darken'd with pansies fadeless, changeless,  
still,

How would it don again youth's triple crown,  
Piercing the keenlier as its roses die?

Nay, but the very wind that stirred his hair

Would seem a tempest to sleep deep as his;

And the perplexèd galaxy of the stars

Intolerable cressets to his eyes,

Accustomed to a night as dark as his;

And the pale dew of daisied turf at dawn

The wine of madness to lips dry as his.

Oh, with what shuddering would those atoms  
meet!

With what a burning sluggardry that blood

Creep thro' its long disusèd channels from

The roaring chaos of his heart! What grief

Would wildly ring in the first words he said!

What sad astonishment besteepest that brain,

And tears more pitiable than infancy's

Blur the estrangèd beauty of the dawn! . . .

Leave thou his memory, as his dust, at rest ;  
Nor burden peace with lamentable cries !  
There lurks no shadow in the crypt of death ;  
Nor any shadow in the height of heaven :  
Beyond the survey of the dark earth gone  
He bides encloistered ev'n from love's surmise.  
Cry then no more, "Return, return !"—no  
more !

Thy thoughts are shallow, thy experience brief ;  
Whence learnedst *thou* of the riches of the  
grave ?

## “PORTRAIT OF A BOY”

VELASQUEZ

AT evens with the copious April clouds ;  
With meek, wild face he stands ; and in his  
eye

Deeps where the empyrean ever broods,  
And in his mouth some femininity.—  
Ah ! for we know his secret, hath not life,  
So strangely shod his feet lest, suddenly,  
He should remember him—the babbling strife  
Of Venus’ sparrows—lest he stoop and fly,  
Chafing at earth, into that April sky ?

## UNPAUSING

O SWEETEST, stay !  
One moment in thy lonely play  
Turn, child, and look  
Ev'n but a little on that great-leaf book,  
Whose livelong record when thine eyes are old  
Will seem, how lovely a tale, how briefly told !



## VAIN FINDING

EVER before my face there went  
    Betwixt earth's buds and me  
A beauty beyond earth's content,  
    A hope—half memory :  
Till in the woods one evening—  
    Ah ! eyes as dark as they,  
Fastened on mine unwontedly,  
    Grey, and dear heart, how grey !

## VIRTUE

HER breast is cold ; her hands how faint and  
wan !

And the deep wonder of her starry eyes,  
Seemingly lost in cloudless Paradise,  
And all earth's sorrow out of memory gone.  
Yet sings her clear voice unrelenting on  
Of loveliest impossibilities ;  
Though echo only answer her with sighs  
Of effort wasted and delights foregone.

Spent, baffled, 'wilderer, hated and despised,  
Her straggling warriors hasten to defeat ;  
By wounds distracted, and by night surprised,  
Fall where death's darkness and oblivion  
meet :

Yet, yet—O breast how cold ! O hope how  
far !

Grant my son's ashes lie where these men's  
are !

## NAPOLEON

“WHAT is the world, O soldiers?

It is I :

I, this incessant snow,

This northern sky ;

Soldiers, this solitude

Through which we go

Is I.”

## ENGLAND

NO lovelier hills than thine have laid  
My tired thoughts to rest ;  
No peace of lovelier valleys made  
Like peace within my breast.

Thine are the woods whereto my soul,  
Out of the noontide beam,  
Flees for a refuge green and cool  
And tranquil as a dream.

Thy breaking seas like trumpets peal ;  
Thy clouds—how oft have I  
Watched their bright towers of silence steal  
Into infinity !

My heart within me faints to roam  
In thought ev'n far from thee :  
Thine be the grave whereto I come,  
And thine my darkness be.

## THE SEAS OF ENGLAND

THE seas of England are our old delight ;  
Let the loud billow of the shingly shore  
Sing freedom on her breezes evermore  
To all earth's ships that sailing heave in sight !

The gaunt sea-nettle be our fortitude,  
Sturdily blowing where the clear wave sips ;  
O, be the glory of our men and ships  
Rapturous, woe-unheeding hardihood !

There is great courage in a land that hath  
Liberty guarded by the unearthly seas ;  
And ev'n to find peace at the last in these  
How many a sailor hath sailed down to death !

Their names are like a splendour in old song ;  
Their record shines like bays along the years ;  
Their jubilation is the cry man hears  
Sailing sun-fronted the vast deeps among.

The seas of England are our old delight ;  
Let the loud billow of the shingly shore  
Sing freedom on her breezes evermore  
To all earth's ships that sailing heave in sight !

## TRUCE

FAR inland here Death's pinions mocked the  
roar

Of English seas ;

We sleep to wake no more,

Hushed, and at ease ;

Till sound a trump, shore on to echoing shore,

Rouse from a peace, unwonted then to war,

Us and our enemies.

## EVENING

WHEN twilight darkens, and one by one,  
The sweet birds to their nests have gone ;  
When to green banks the glow-worms bring  
Pale lamps to brighten evening ;  
Then stirs in his thick sleep the owl  
Thorough the dewy air to prowl.

Hawking the meadows swiftly he flits,  
While the small mouse atrembling sits  
With tiny eye of fear upcast  
Until his brooding shape be past,  
Hiding her where the moonbeams beat,  
Casting black shadows in the wheat.

Now all is still : the field-man is  
Lapped deep in slumb'ring silentness.  
Not a leaf stirs, but clouds on high  
Pass in dim flocks across the sky,  
Puffed by a breeze too light to move  
Aught but these wakeful sheep above.



O what an arch of light now spans  
These fields by night no longer Man's!  
Their ancient Master is abroad,  
Walking beneath the moonlight cold :  
His presence is the stillness, He  
Fills earth with beauteous mystery.

## NIGHT

ALL from the light of the sweet moon  
Tired men lie now abed ;  
Actionless, full of visions, soon  
Vanishing, soon sped.

The starry night afloat with beams  
Of crystal light scarce stirs :  
Only its birds—the cocks, the streams,  
Call 'neath heaven's Wanderers.

All's silent ; all hearts still ;  
Love, cunning, fire fall'n low :  
When faint morn straying on the hill  
Sighs, and his soft airs flow.

## THE UNIVERSE

I HEARD a little child 'neath many stars  
    Talk as he ran along  
To some sweet riddle in his mind that  
    seemed  
    A tiptoe into song.

In his dark eyes lay a wild universe,—  
    Wild forests, peaks, and crests,  
Angels and fairies, giants, wolves and he  
    Were that world's only guests.

Elsewhere was home and mother, his warm  
    bed :—  
    Now, only God alone  
Could, arm'd with all His power and wisdom,  
    make  
    Earths richer than his own.

O Man!—thy dreams, thy passions, hopes,  
desires!—

He in his pity keep

A homely bed where love may lull a child's  
Fond Universe asleep!

## MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD.

### REVERIE

BRING not bright candles, for his eyes  
In twilight have sweet company ;  
Bring not bright candles, else they fly—  
His phantoms fly—  
Gazing aggrieved on thee !

Bring not bright candles, startle not  
The phantoms of a vacant room,  
Flocking above a child that dreams—  
Deep, deep in dreams,—  
Hid, in the gathering gloom !

Bring not bright candles to those eyes  
That between earth and stars descry,  
Lovelier for the shadows there,  
Children of air,  
Palaces in the sky !

## THE MASSACRE

THE shadow of a poplar tree  
Lay in that lake of sun,  
As I with my little sword went in—  
Against a thousand, one.

Haughty and infinitely armed,  
Insolent in their wrath,  
Plumed high with purple plumes they held  
The narrow meadow path.

The air was sultry ; all was still ;  
The sun like flashing glass ;  
And snip-snap my light-whispering steel  
In arcs of light did pass.

Lightly and dull fell each proud head,  
Spiked keen without avail,  
Till swam my discontented blade  
With ichor green and pale.

And silence fell : the rushing sun  
    Stood still in paths of heat,  
Gazing in waves of horror on  
    The dead about my feet.

Never a whir of wing, no bee  
    Stirred o'er the shameful slain ;  
Nought but a thirsty wasp crept in,  
    Stooped, and came out again.

The very air trembled in fear ;  
    Eclipsing shadow seemed  
Rising in crimson waves of gloom—  
    On one who dreamed.

## ECHO

“WHO called?” I said, and the words  
Through the whispering glades,  
Hither, thither, baffled the birds—  
“Who called? Who called?”

The leafy boughs on high  
Hissed in the sun ;  
The dark air carried my cry  
Faintly on ;—

Eyes in the green, in the shade,  
In the motionless brake,  
Voices that said what I said,  
For mockery's sake ;—

“Who cares?” I bawled thro' my tears ;  
The wind fell low :  
In the silence, “Who cares? who cares?”  
Wailed to and fro.



## FEAR

I KNOW where lurk  
The eyes of Fear ;  
I, I alone,  
Where shadowy-clear,  
Watching for me,  
Lurks Fear.

'Tis ever still  
And dark, despite  
All singing and  
All candlelight,  
'Tis ever cold,  
And night.

He touches me ;  
Says quietly,  
" Stir not, nor whisper,  
I am nigh ;  
Walk noiseless on,  
I am by ! "

He drives me  
As a dog a sheep ;  
Like a cold stone  
I cannot weep.  
He lifts me  
Hot from sleep

In marble hands  
To where on high  
The jewelled horror  
Of his eye  
Dares me to struggle  
Or cry.

No breast wherein  
To chase away  
That watchful shape !  
Vain, vain to say  
" Haunt not with night  
The day ! "

## THE MERMAIDS

SAND, sand ; hills of sand ;  
And the wind where nothing is  
Green and sweet of the land ;  
    No grass, no trees,  
    No bird, no butterfly,  
But hills, hills of sand,  
    And a burning sky.

Sea, sea ; mounds of the sea,  
    Hollow, and dark, and blue,  
Flashing incessantly  
    The whole sea through ;  
    No flower, no jutting root,  
Only the floor of the sea,  
    With foam afloat.

Blow, blow, winding shells ;  
    And the watery fish,  
Deaf to the hidden bells,  
    In the waters splash ;

No streaming gold, no eyes  
Watching along the waves,  
But far-blown shells, faint bells,  
From the darkling caves.

## MYSELF

THERE is a garden grey  
With mists of autumntide ;  
Under the giant boughs,  
Stretched green on every side,

Along the lonely paths,  
A little child like me,  
With face, with hands like mine,  
Plays ever silently ;

On, on, quite silently,  
When I am there alone,  
Turns not his head ; lifts not his eyes ;  
Heeds not as he plays on.

After the birds are flown  
From singing in the trees,  
When all is grey, all silent,  
Voices, and winds, and bees ;

And I am there alone :  
Forlornly, silently,  
Plays in the evening garden  
Myself with me.

## AUTUMN

THERE is wind where the rose was ;  
Cold rain where sweet grass was ;  
    And clouds like sheep  
    Stream o'er the steep  
Grey skies where the lark was.

Nought gold where your hair was ;  
Nought warm where your hand was ;  
    But phantom, forlorn,  
    Beneath the thorn,  
Your ghost where your face was.

Sad winds where your voice was ;  
Tears, tears where my heart was ;  
    And ever with me,  
    Child, ever with me,  
Silence where hope was.

## WINTER

GREEN Mistletoe !

Oh, I remember now

A dell of snow,

Frost on the bough ;

None there but I :

Snow, snow, and a wintry sky.

None there but I,

And footprints one by one,

Zigzaggedly,

Where I had run ;

Where gimp and powdery

A robin sat in the tree.

And he whistled sweet ;

And I in the crusted snow

With snow-clubb'd feet

Jigged to and fro,

Till, from the day,

The rose-light ebbed away.



And the robin flew  
Into the air, the air,  
The white mist through ;  
And small and rare  
The night-frost fell  
Into the calm and misty dell.

And the dusk gathered low,  
And the silver moon and stars  
On the frozen snow  
Drew taper bars,  
Kindled winking fires  
In the hooded briers.

And the sprawling Bear  
Growled deep in the sky ;  
And Orion's hair  
Streamed sparkling by :  
But the North sighed low,  
" Snow, snow, more snow ! "

## ENVOY

### TO MY MOTHER

THINE is my all, how little when 'tis told  
Beside thy gold !  
Thine the first peace, and mine the livelong  
strife ;  
Thine the clear dawn, and mine the night of  
life ;  
Thine the unstain'd belief,  
Darkened in grief.

Scarce ev'n a flow'r but thine its beauty and  
name,  
Dimm'd, yet the same ;  
Never in twilight comes the moon to me,  
Stealing thro' childhood's woods, but tells of  
thee,  
Falls, dear, on my wild heart,  
And takes thy part.

*Thou* art the child, and I—how steeped in  
age!

A blotted page  
From that clear, little book life's tak'n away :  
How could I read it dear, so dark's the day ?  
Be it all memory  
'Twixt thee and me !





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

REC'D LD-URL

MAY 05 1987

MAR 12 1957

OCT 8 1959

MAR 12 1959

JAN 18 1960

8 1962

10 1963

REC'D LD-URL

OL JAN 6 1975

MAR 1 1974

MAR 21 1987

MAR 21 1987

RENEWAL  
LD URL

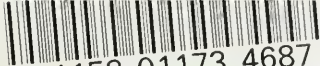
APR 7 1987

RENEWAL  
LD URL

JUN 1 1987

Form L9-100m-9,'52(A3105)444

THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES



3 1158 01173 4687

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**AA** 000 383 604 6

